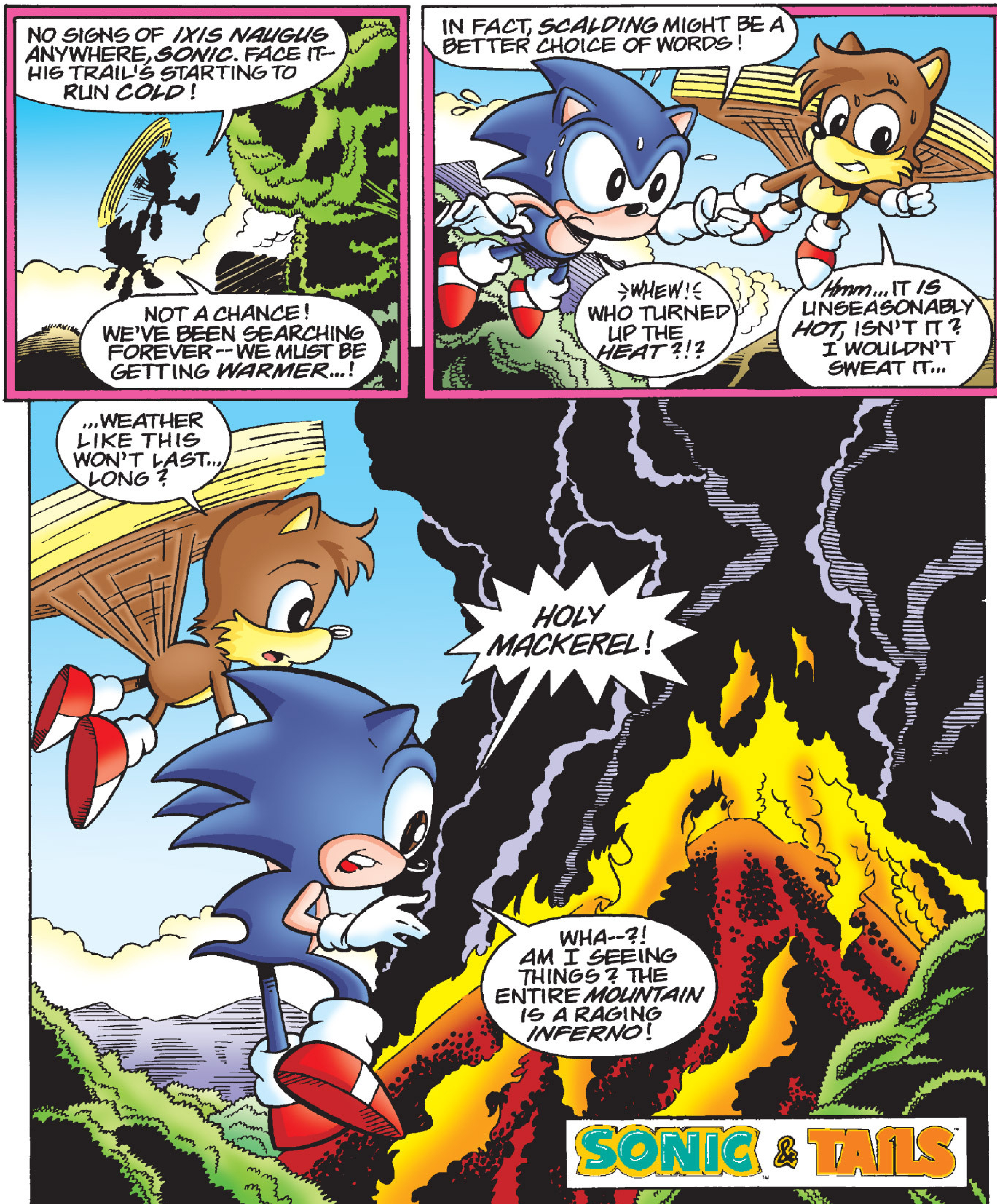
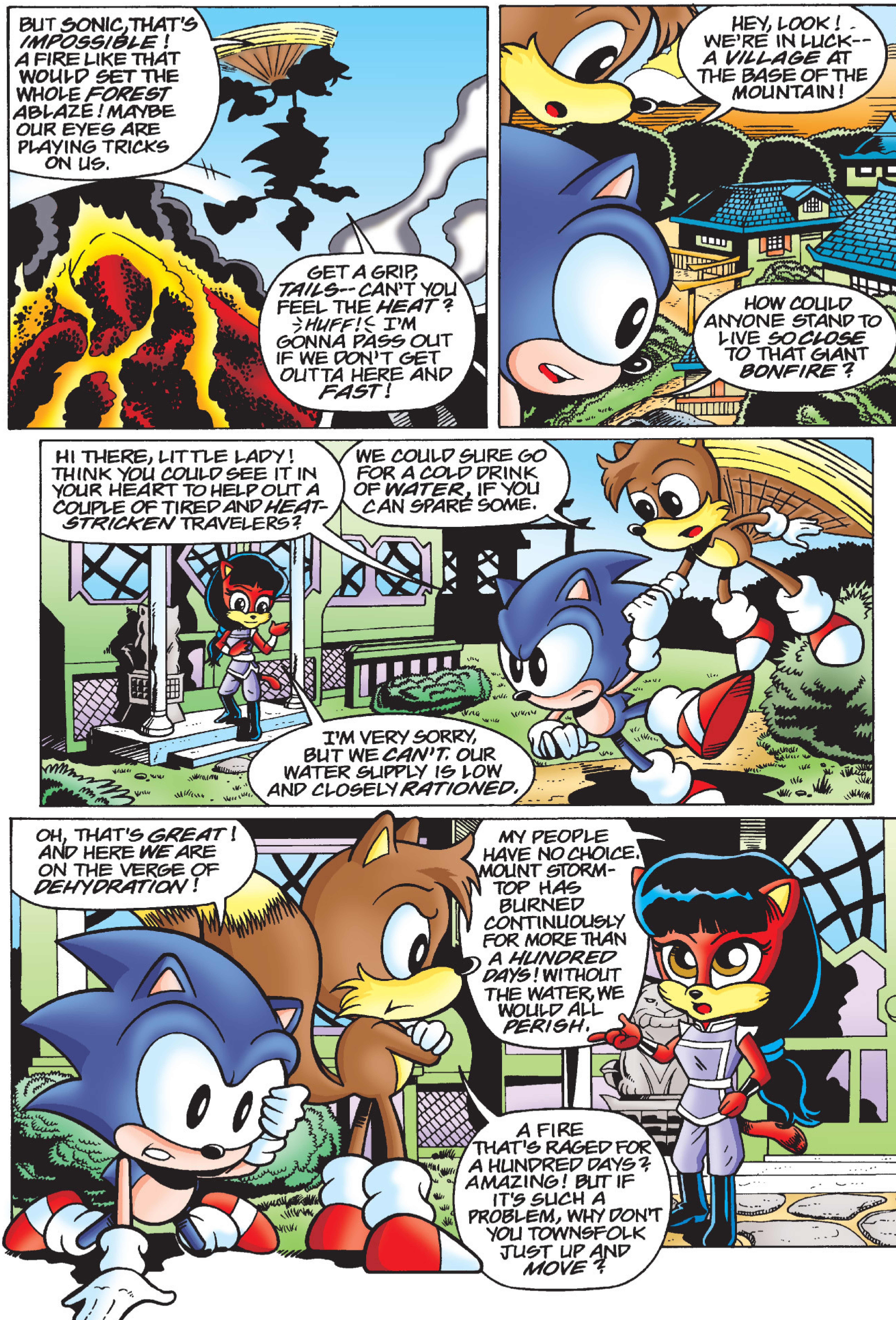


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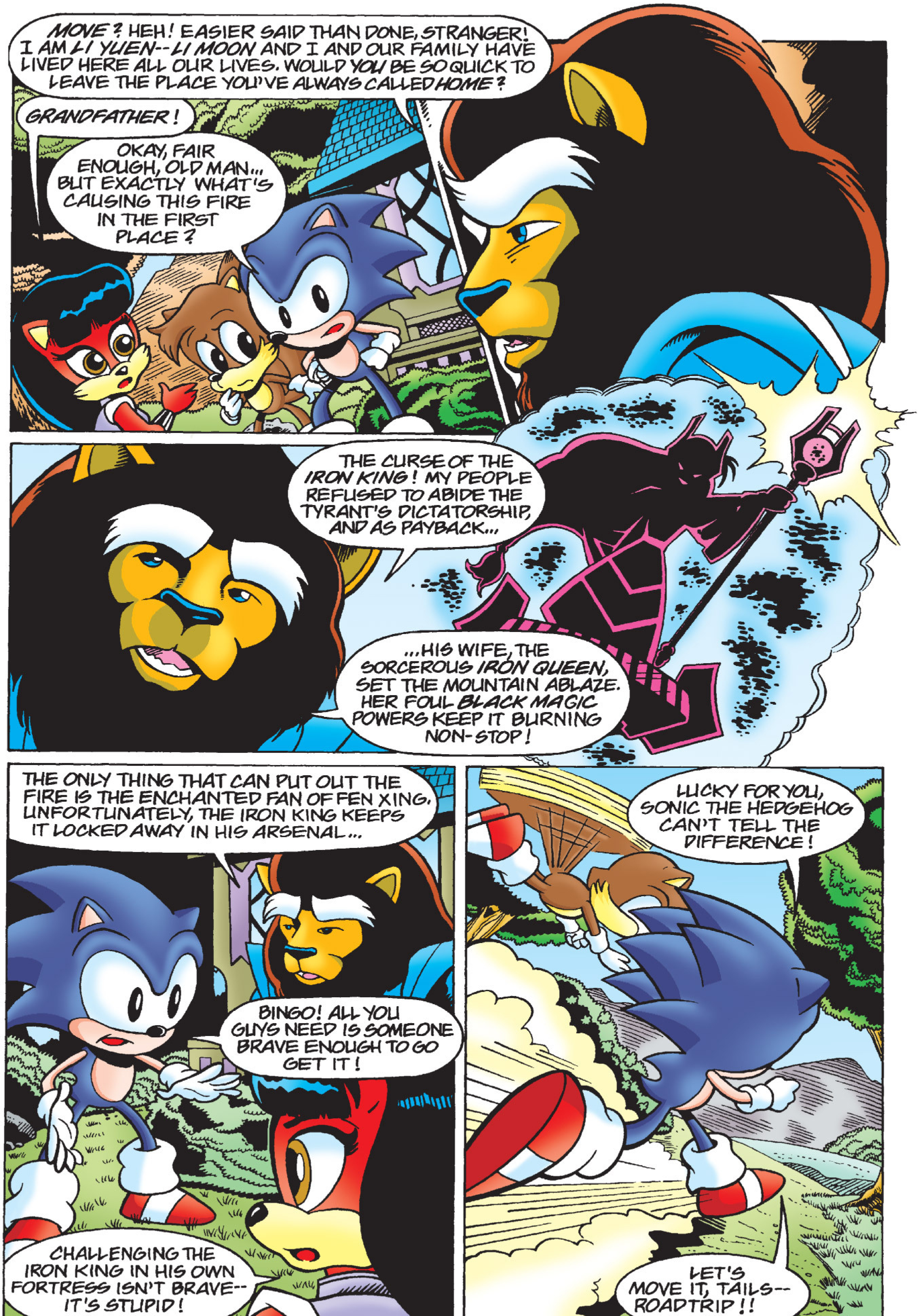


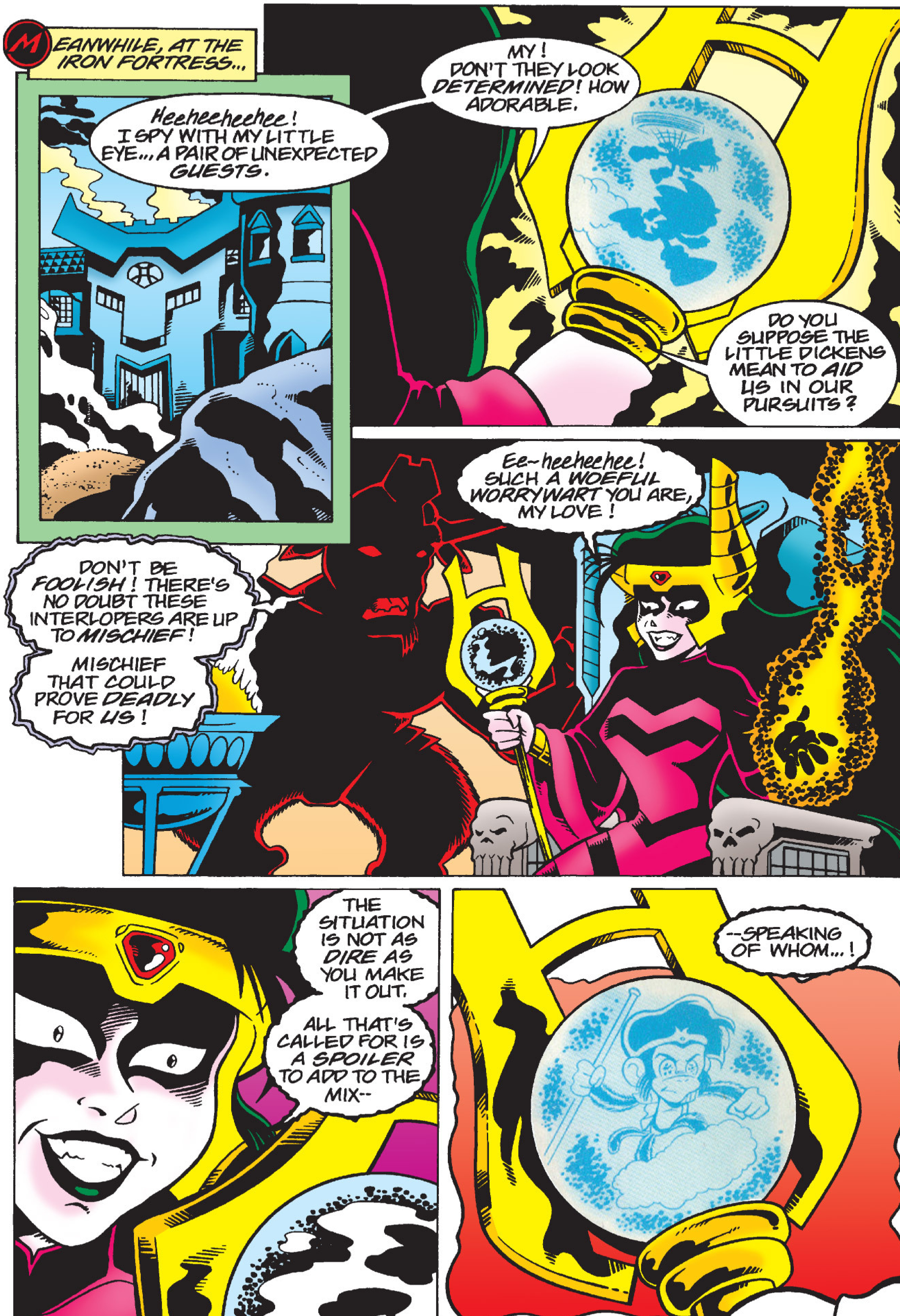
ARSENAL OF THE IRON KING

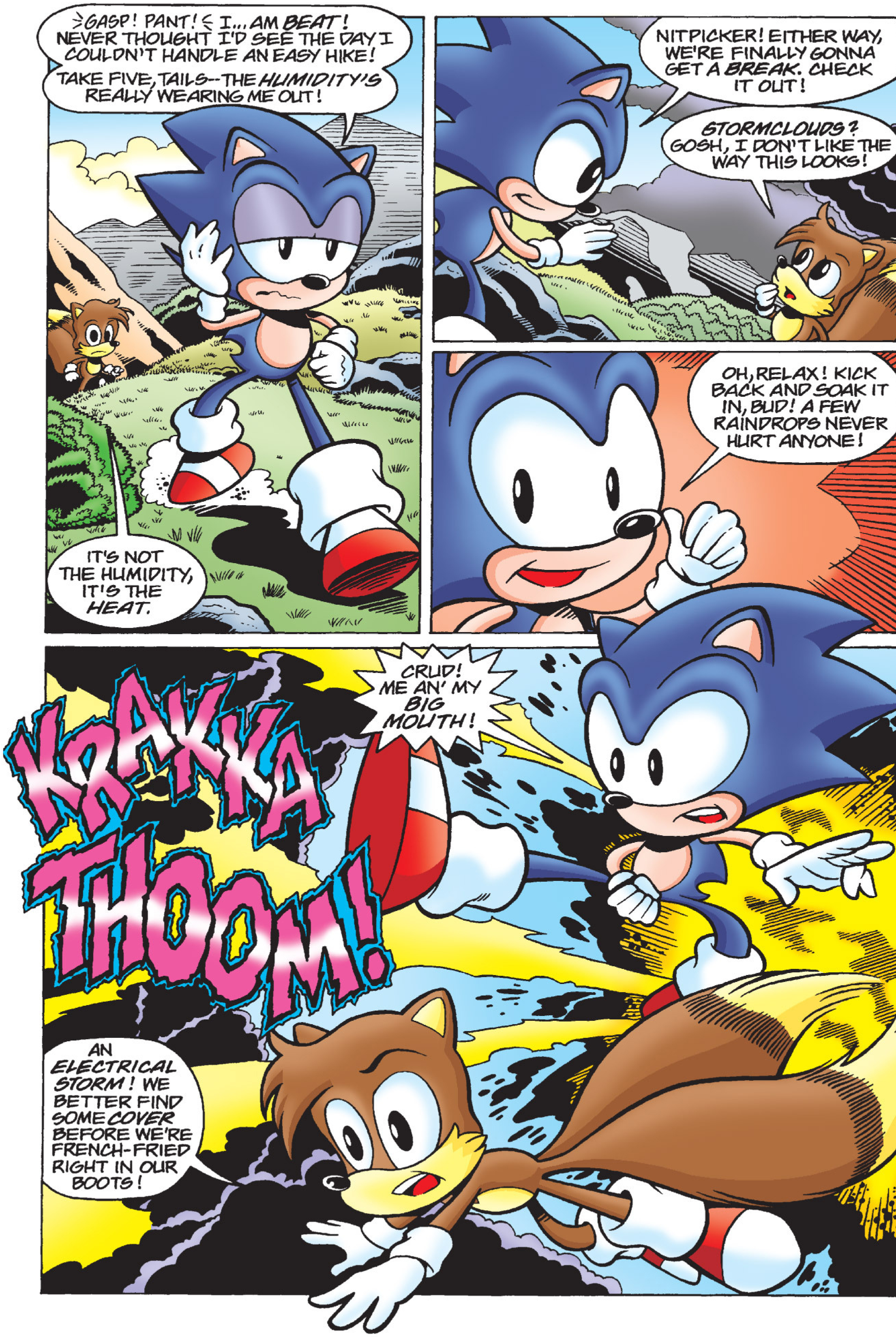
FRANK STROM-*STORY & ART*
JIM AMASH-*INKS*
BARRY GROSSMAN-*COLORS*
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VICTOR GORELICK-*MNG. EDITOR*
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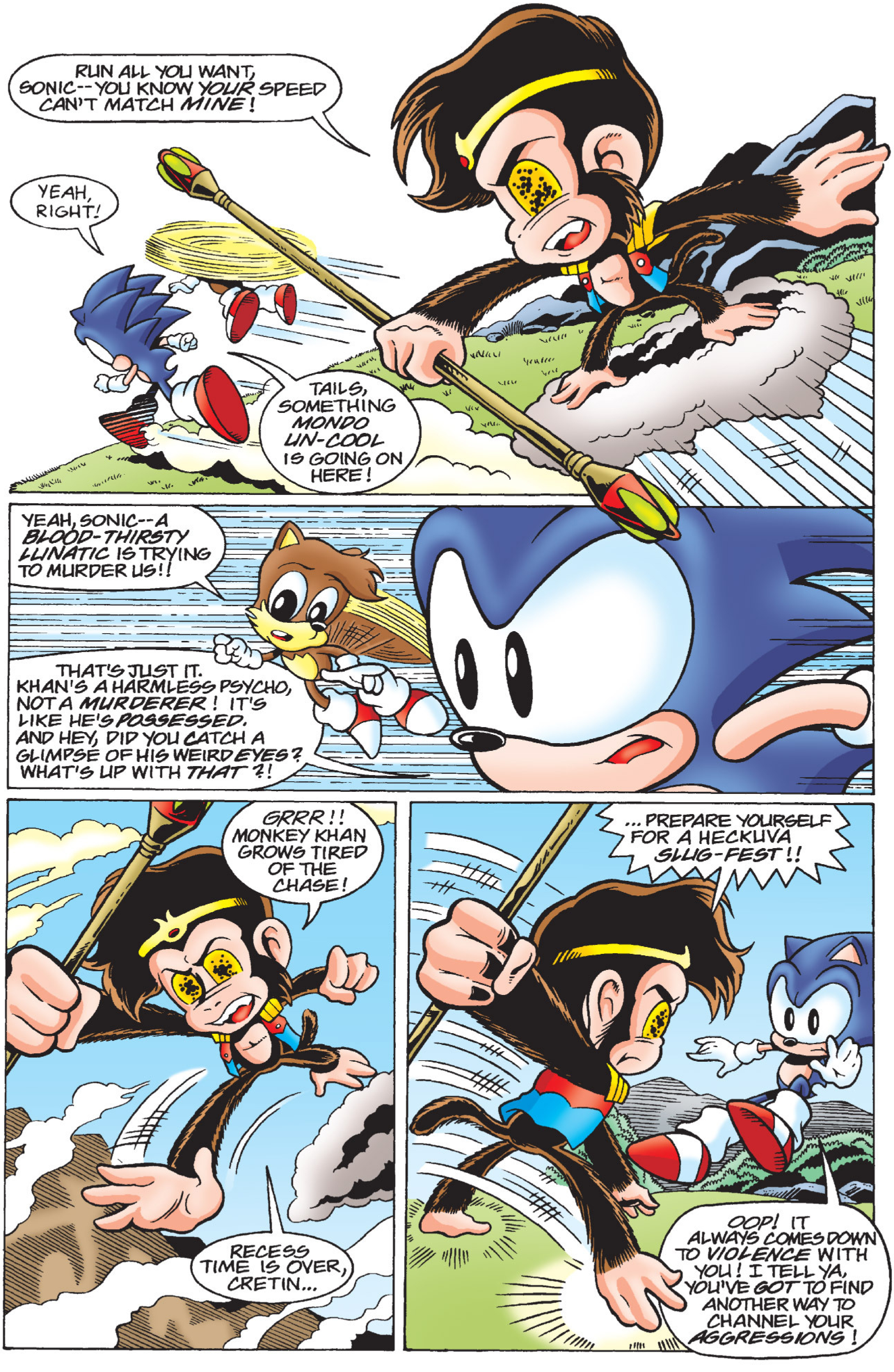
BUT SONIC, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! A FIRE LIKE THAT WOULD SET THE WHOLE FOREST ABLAZE! MAYBE OUR EYES ARE PLAYING TRICKS ON US.
GET A GRIP, TAILS-- CAN'T YOU FEEL THE HEAT? ≯HUFF!≮ I'M GONNA PASS OUT IF WE DON'T GET OUTTA HERE AND FAST!
HEY, LOOK! WE'RE IN LUCK-- A VILLAGE AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN!
HOW COULD ANYONE STAND TO LIVE SO CLOSE TO THAT GIANT BONFIRE?
HI THERE, LITTLE LADY! THINK YOU COULD SEE IT IN YOUR HEART TO HELP OUT A COUPLE OF TIRED AND HEAT-STRICKEN TRAVELERS?
WE COULD SURE GO FOR A COLD DRINK OF WATER, IF YOU CAN SPARE SOME.
I'M VERY SORRY, BUT WE CAN'T. OUR WATER SUPPLY IS LOW AND CLOSELY RATIONED.
OH, THAT'S GREAT! AND HERE WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF DEHYDRATION!
MY PEOPLE HAVE NO CHOICE. MOUNT STORM-TOP HAS BURNED CONTINUOUSLY FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED DAYS! WITHOUT THE WATER, WE WOULD ALL PERISH.
A FIRE THAT'S RAGED FOR A HUNDRED DAYS? AMAZING! BUT IF IT'S SUCH A PROBLEM, WHY DON'T YOU TOWNSFOLK JUST UP AND MOVE?

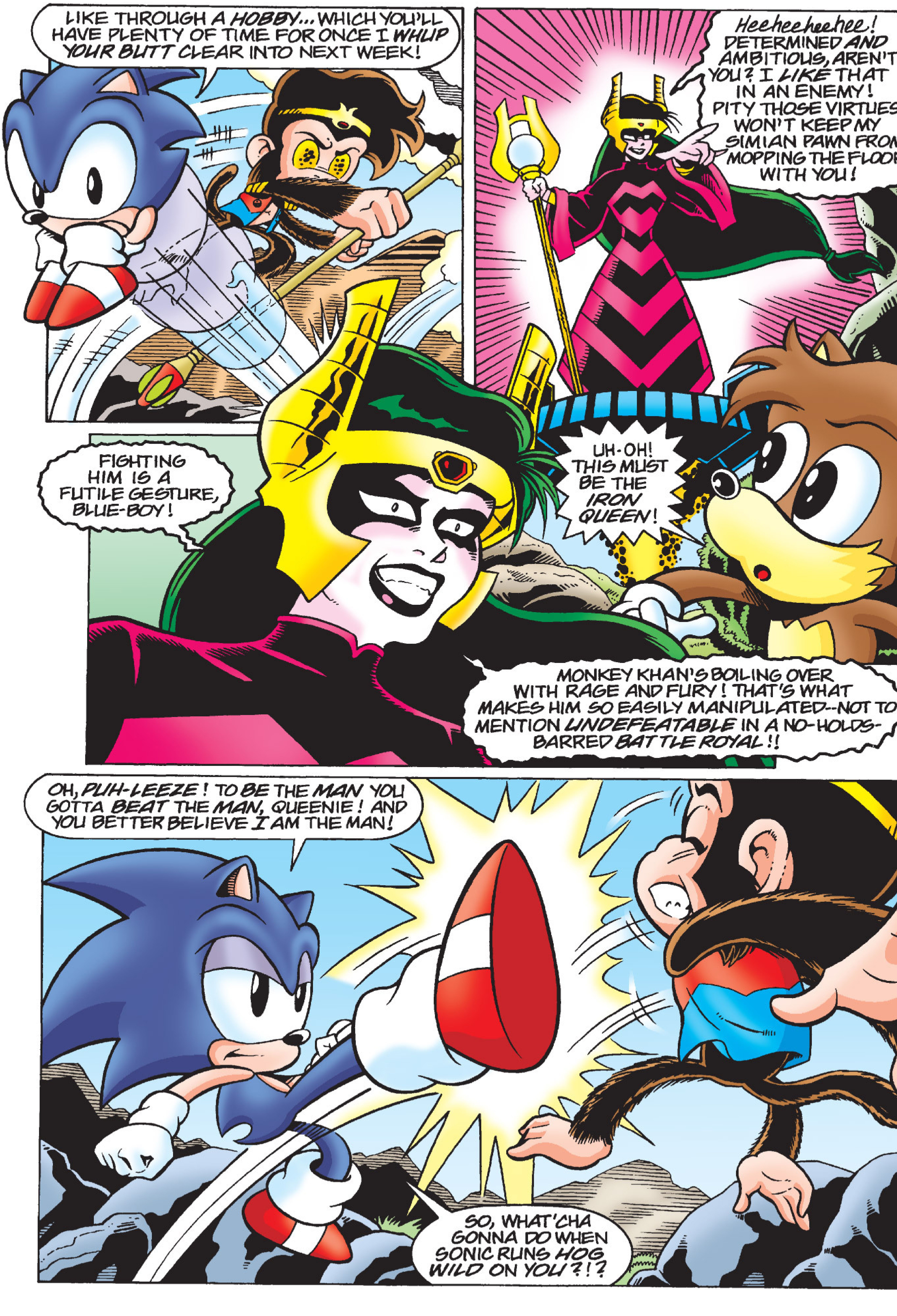

MOVE? HEH! EASIER SAID THAN DONE, STRANGER! I AM LI YUEN--LI MOON AND I AND OUR FAMILY HAVE LIVED HERE ALL OUR LIVES. WOULD YOU BE SO QUICK TO LEAVE THE PLACE YOU'VE ALWAYS CALLED HOME?
GRANDFATHER!
OKAY, FAIR ENOUGH, OLD MAN... BUT EXACTLY WHAT'S CAUSING THIS FIRE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
THE CURSE OF THE IRON KING! MY PEOPLE REFUSED TO ABIDE THE TYRANT'S DICTATORSHIP, AND AS PAYBACK...
...HIS WIFE, THE SORCEROUS IRON QUEEN, SET THE MOUNTAIN ABLAZE. HER FOUL BLACK MAGIC POWERS KEEP IT BURNING NON-STOP!
THE ONLY THING THAT CAN PUT OUT THE FIRE IS THE ENCHANTED FAN OF FEN XING. UNFORTUNATELY, THE IRON KING KEEPS IT LOCKED AWAY IN HIS ARSENAL...
BINGO! ALL YOU GUYS NEED IS SOMEONE BRAVE ENOUGH TO GO GET IT!
CHALLENGING THE IRON KING IN HIS OWN FORTRESS ISN'T BRAVE--IT'S STUPID!
LUCKY FOR YOU, SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE!
LET'S MOVE IT, TAILS--ROADTRIP!!


MEANWHILE, AT THE IRON FORTRESS...
Heeheeheehee! I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE... A PAIR OF UNEXPECTED GUESTS.
MY! DON'T THEY LOOK DETERMINED! HOW ADORABLE.
DO YOU SUPPOSE THE LITTLE DICKENS MEAN TO AID US IN OUR PURSUITS?
Ee-heeheehee! SUCH A WOEFUL WORRYWART YOU ARE, MY LOVE!
DON'T BE FOOLISH! THERE'S NO DOUBT THESE INTERLOPERS ARE UP TO MISCHIEF!
MISCHIEF THAT COULD PROVE DEADLY FOR US!
THE SITUATION IS NOT AS DIRE AS YOU MAKE IT OUT.
ALL THAT'S CALLED FOR IS A SPOILER TO ADD TO THE MIX--
--SPEAKING OF WHOM...!


≥GASP! PANT!≤ I... AM BEAT! NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY I COULDN'T HANDLE AN EASY HIKE!
TAKE FIVE, TAILS--THE HUMIDITY'S REALLY WEARING ME OUT!
IT'S NOT THE HUMIDITY, IT'S THE HEAT.
NITPICKER! EITHER WAY, WE'RE FINALLY GONNA GET A BREAK. CHECK IT OUT!
STORMCLOUDS? GOSH, I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS LOOKS!
OH, RELAX! KICK BACK AND SOAK IT IN, BUD! A FEW RAINDROPS NEVER HURT ANYONE!
KRAKKA THOOM!
CRUD! ME AN' MY BIG MOUTH!
AN ELECTRICAL STORM! WE BETTER FIND SOME COVER BEFORE WE'RE FRENCH-FRIED RIGHT IN OUR BOOTS!

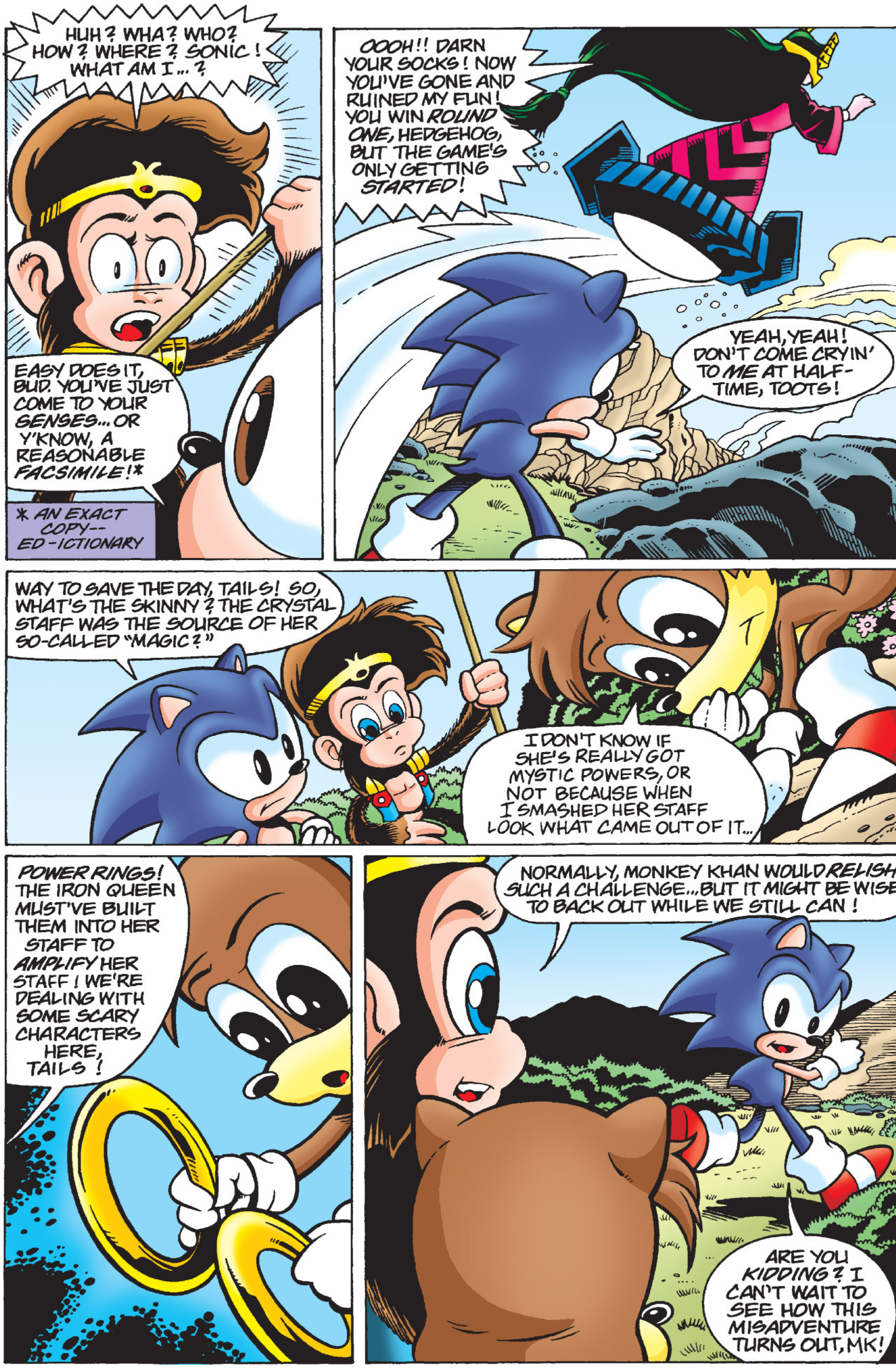

HOLD! ENEMIES OF THE IRON KING MAY GO NO FURTHER... UNLESS YOU WISH TO FACE MY TERRIBLE WRATH!
DOESN'T IT USUALLY RAIN CATS AND DOGS RATHER THAN MONKEYS?
BIG TROUBLE! THAT'S THE SIMIAN SUPER-CYBORG HIMSELF-- MONKEY KHAN! FUNNY THING IS, I COULD'A SWORN HE AND I PARTED AS FRIENDS WHEN LAST WE MET... !*
*THEY MET IN SONIC Archives Vol.15 --EDITOR
DOLT! MONKEY KHAN IS NO ONE'S FRIEND! LEAST OF ALL THOSE WHO WOULD OPPOSE THE IRON KING!
HUH! AFTER ALL THAT TIME HE WAS ROBOTNIK'S DUPE, YOU'D THINK FUZZY WOULDN'T BE TAKING ORDERS FROM ANYONE!

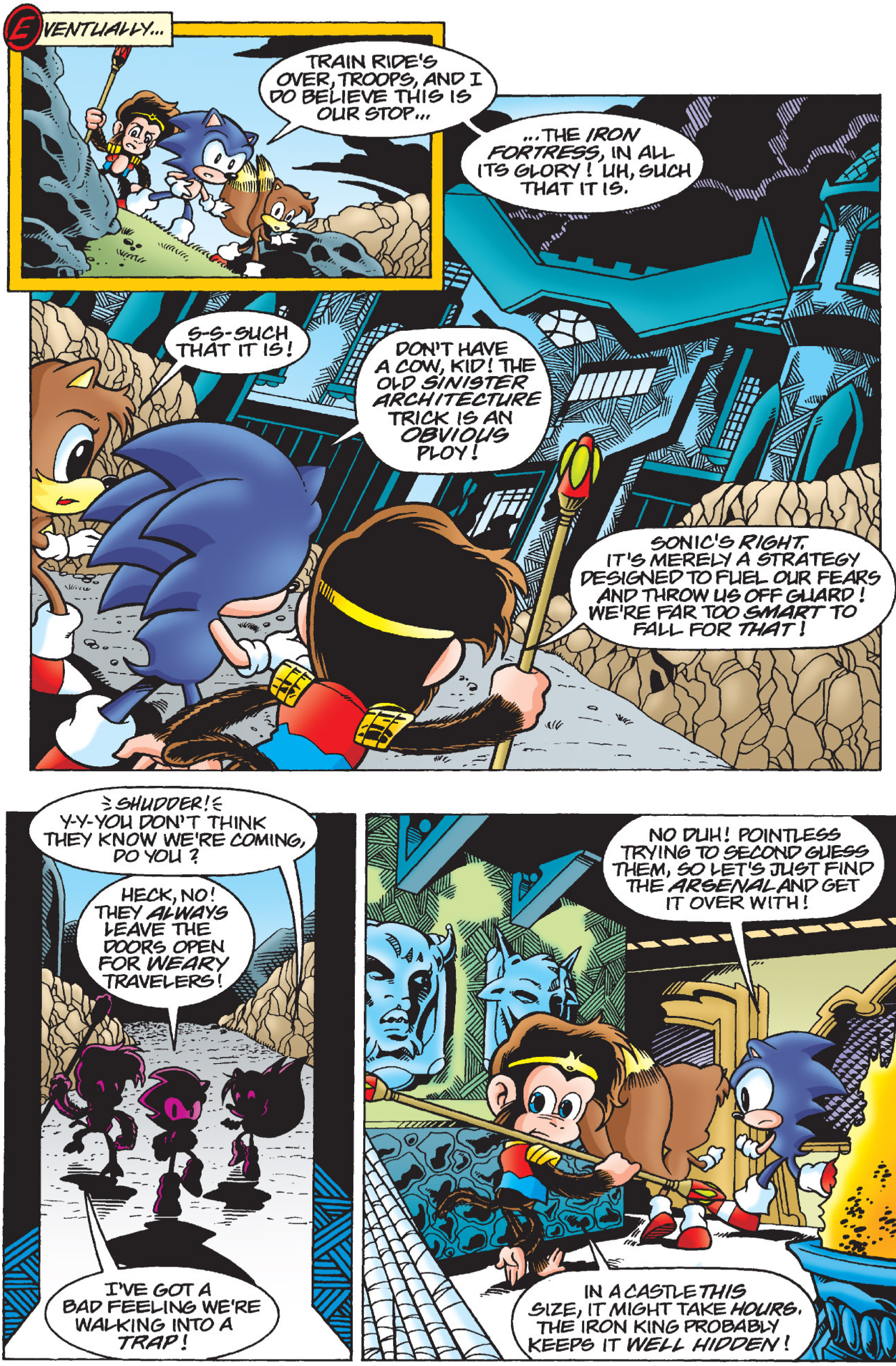

RUN ALL YOU WANT, SONIC--YOU KNOW YOUR SPEED CAN'T MATCH MINE!
YEAH, RIGHT!
TAILS, SOMETHING MONDO UN-COOL IS GOING ON HERE!
YEAH, SONIC--A BLOOD-THIRSTY LUNATIC IS TRYING TO MURDER US!!
THAT'S JUST IT. KHAN'S A HARMLESS PSYCHO, NOT A MURDERER! IT'S LIKE HE'S POSSESSED. AND HEY, DID YOU CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HIS WEIRD EYES? WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?!
GRRR!! MONKEY KHAN GROWS TIRED OF THE CHASE!
RECESS TIME IS OVER, CRETIN...
...PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A HECKUVA SLUG-FEST!!
OOP! IT ALWAYS COMES DOWN TO VIOLENCE WITH YOU! I TELL YA, YOU'VE GOT TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO CHANNEL YOUR AGGRESSIONS!


LIKE THROUGH A *HOBBY*... WHICH YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME FOR ONCE I *WHUP YOUR BUTT* CLEAR INTO NEXT WEEK!
Heeheeheehee! DETERMINED *AND* AMBITIOUS, AREN'T YOU? I *LIKE* THAT IN AN ENEMY! PITY THOSE VIRTUES WON'T KEEP MY SIMIAN PAWN FROM MOPPING THE FLOOR WITH YOU!
FIGHTING HIM IS A FUTILE GESTURE, BLUE-BOY!
UH-OH! THIS MUST BE THE *IRON QUEEN*!
MONKEY KHAN'S BOILING OVER WITH RAGE AND FURY! THAT'S WHAT MAKES HIM SO EASILY MANIPULATED--NOT TO MENTION *UNDEFEATABLE* IN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED *BATTLE ROYAL*!!
OH, *PUH-LEEZE*! TO *BE* THE *MAN* YOU GOTTA *BEAT* THE *MAN*, QUEENIE! AND YOU BETTER BELIEVE *I* AM THE MAN!
SO, WHAT'CHA GONNA DO WHEN SONIC RUNS *HOG WILD* ON *YOU*?!?

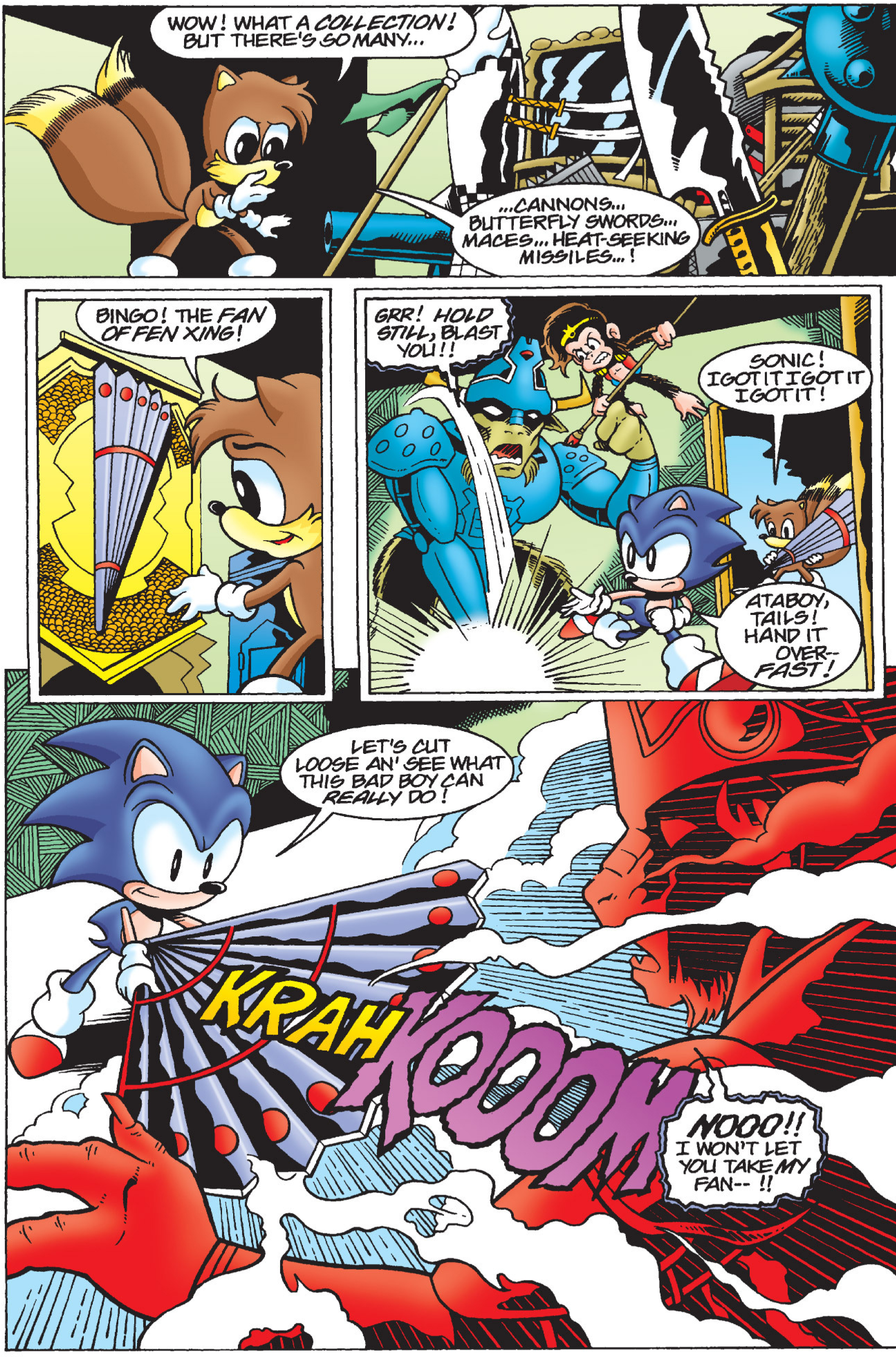


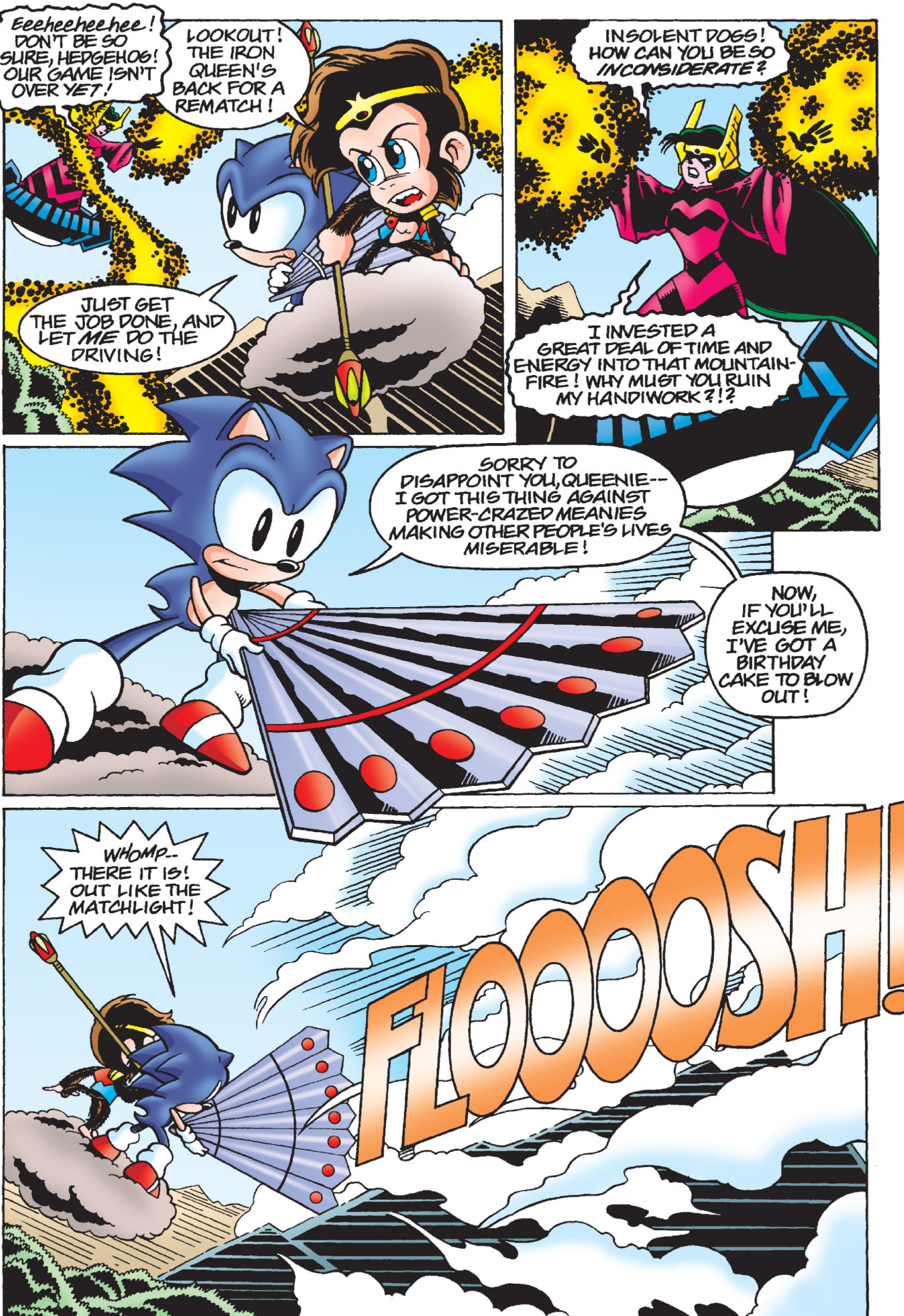
≥SIGH!≤ EVERYONE'S GOTTA HAVE A DREAM, I SUPPOSE. WELL, ENJOY THOSE SCANT FEW MOMENTS OF BLISS, HEDGEHOG, 'CAUSE YOU'RE IN FOR A RUDE AWAKENING! (Hee! SORRY--I COULDN'T RESIST!)
YOU'VE GOT 'IM ON THE ROPES, MONKEY KHAN! FINISH HIM OFF!!
YEEKS!
I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT A TOUGH CUSTOMER THIS GUY IS! NEXT TIME I WON'T MAKE THE MISTAKE OF UNDERESTIMATING THE OPPOSITION!
ER... ASSUMING THERE IS A NEXT TIME! WHAT A THRILL-- AN HONEST-TO-GOSH CLIFFHANGER!
SONIC'S TOAST UNLESS I CAN MESS UP THE WITCH'S SPELL...
...LIKE BY KNOCKING OUT HER CRYSTAL STAFF...
COWABUNGAAAAAH!
KRAAASH!


HUH? WHA? WHO? HOW? WHERE? SONIC! WHAT AM I...?
EASY DOES IT, BUD. YOU'VE JUST COME TO YOUR SENSES... OR Y'KNOW, A REASONABLE FACSIMILE!*
* AN EXACT COPY-- ED-ICTIONARY
OOOH!! DARN YOUR SOCKS! NOW YOU'VE GONE AND RUINED MY FUN! YOU WIN ROUND ONE, HEDGEHOG, BUT THE GAME'S ONLY GETTING STARTED!
YEAH, YEAH! DON'T COME CRYIN' TO ME AT HALF-TIME, TOOTS!
WAY TO SAVE THE DAY, TAILS! SO, WHAT'S THE SKINNY? THE CRYSTAL STAFF WAS THE SOURCE OF HER SO-CALLED "MAGIC?"
I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S REALLY GOT MYSTIC POWERS, OR NOT BECAUSE WHEN I SMASHED HER STAFF LOOK WHAT CAME OUT OF IT...
POWER RINGS! THE IRON QUEEN MUST'VE BUILT THEM INTO HER STAFF TO AMPLIFY HER STAFF! WE'RE DEALING WITH SOME SCARY CHARACTERS HERE, TAILS!
NORMALLY, MONKEY KHAN WOULD RELISH SUCH A CHALLENGE... BUT IT MIGHT BE WISE TO BACK OUT WHILE WE STILL CAN!
ARE YOU KIDDING? I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HOW THIS MISADVENTURE TURNS OUT, MK!

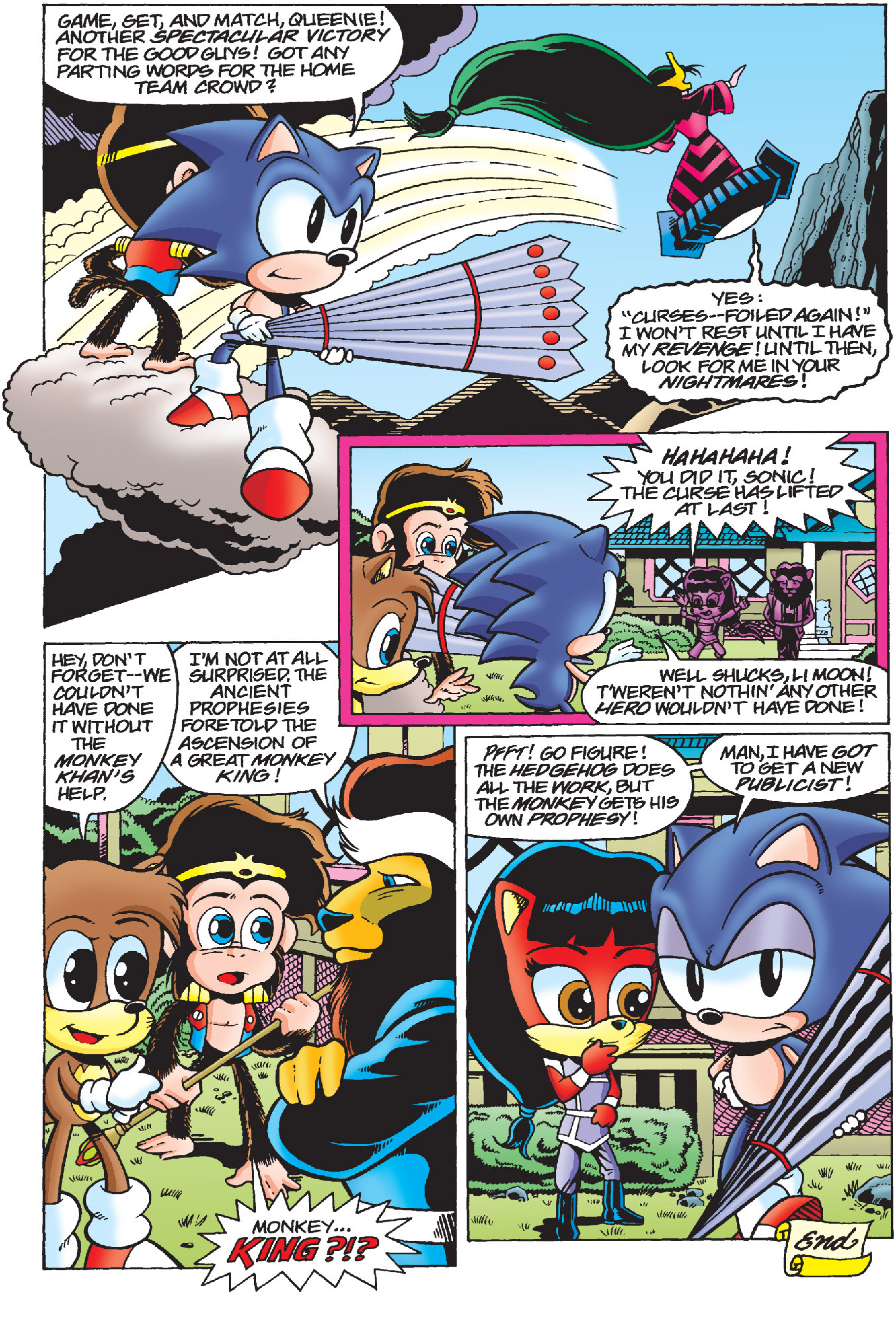

EVENTUALLY...
TRAIN RIDE'S OVER, TROOPS, AND I DO BELIEVE THIS IS OUR STOP...
...THE IRON FORTRESS, IN ALL ITS GLORY! UH, SUCH THAT IT IS.
S-S-SUCH THAT IT IS!
DON'T HAVE A COW, KID! THE OLD SINISTER ARCHITECTURE TRICK IS AN OBVIOUS PLOY!
SONIC'S RIGHT. IT'S MERELY A STRATEGY DESIGNED TO FUEL OUR FEARS AND THROW US OFF GUARD! WE'RE FAR TOO SMART TO FALL FOR THAT!
SHUDDER! Y-Y-YOU DON'T THINK THEY KNOW WE'RE COMING, DO YOU?
HECK, NO! THEY ALWAYS LEAVE THE DOORS OPEN FOR WEARY TRAVELERS!
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING WE'RE WALKING INTO A TRAP!
NO DUH! POINTLESS TRYING TO SECOND GUESS THEM, SO LET'S JUST FIND THE ARSENAL AND GET IT OVER WITH!
IN A CASTLE THIS SIZE, IT MIGHT TAKE HOURS. THE IRON KING PROBABLY KEEPS IT WELL HIDDEN!


I WOULDN'T BE SO SURE ABOUT THAT. HERE IT IS!
COOL! LET'S SEE WHAT'S IN THE--!!
EGOCENTRIC PUP! YOU COULDN'T BE FURTHER OFF THE MARK!
THOOM
CHEEZIT! THE BIG GUY'S ON TO US!
THE IRON KING'S SECURITY SYSTEM IS TOP NOTCH--EACH AND EVERY SNEAK-THIEF IS DEALT WITH PERSONALLY!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, TAILS--NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO NAB THE FAN!
BUT, SONIC, I CAN'T LEAVE YOU BEHIND LIKE THIS...!
RIDICULOUS! NOT WHEN MONKEY KHAN IS HERE TO BACK HIM UP! THERE'S NOTHING ME AND MY ATOM-BAT ENJOY MORE THAN A GOOD TUSSLE!
HAHAHAHA!
WE'LL SEE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT AFTER THE IRON KING CRUSHES YOU TO PULP!

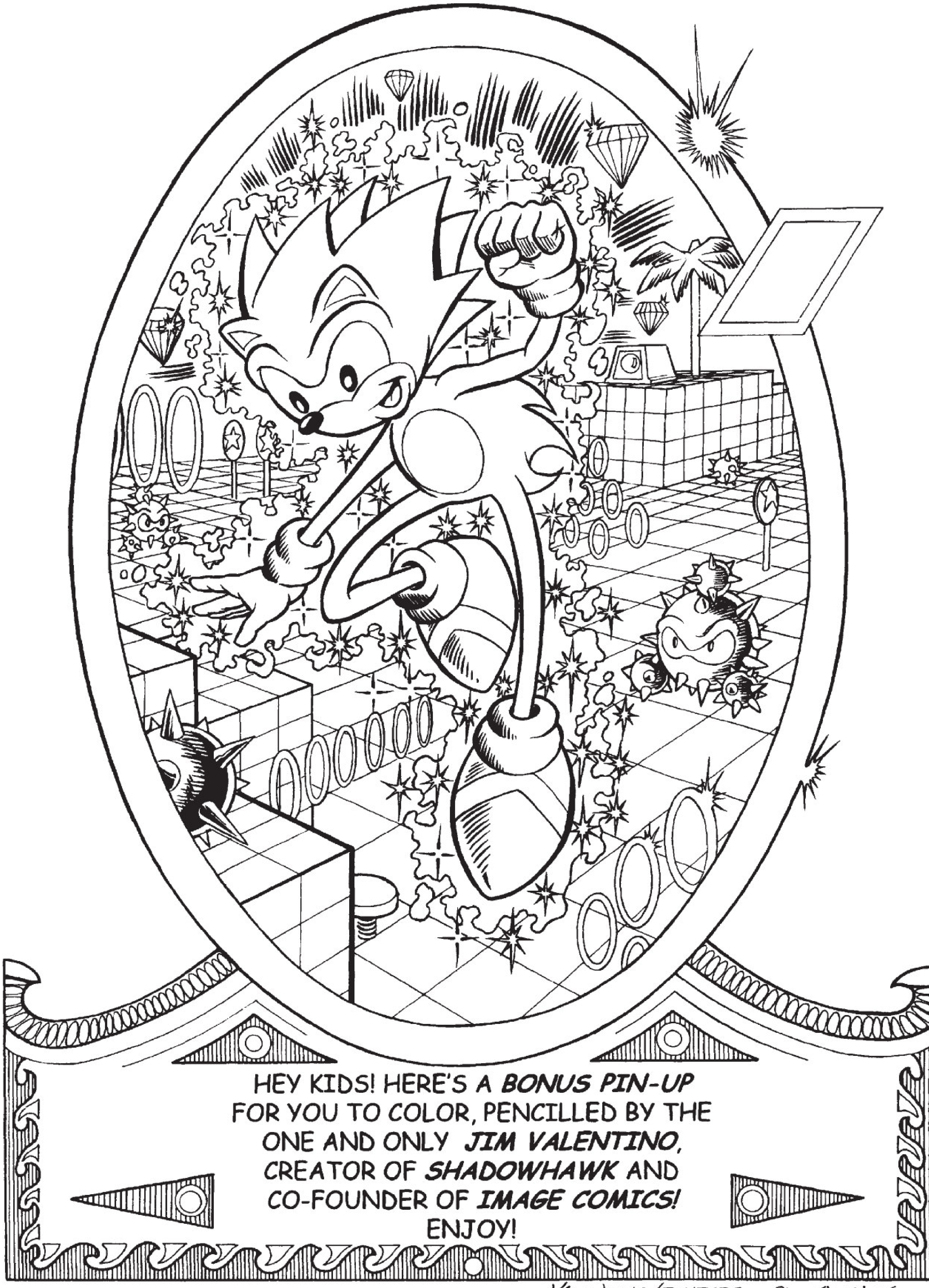

WOW! WHAT A COLLECTION! BUT THERE'S SO MANY...
...CANNONS... BUTTERFLY SWORDS... MACES... HEAT-SEEKING MISSILES...!
BINGO! THE FAN OF FEN XING!
GRR! HOLD STILL, BLAST YOU!!
SONIC! I GOT IT I GOT IT I GOT IT!
ATABOY, TAILS! HAND IT OVER--FAST!
LET'S CUT LOOSE AN' SEE WHAT THIS BAD BOY CAN REALLY DO!
KRAH
KOOOM
NOOO!! I WON'T LET YOU TAKE MY FAN-- !!



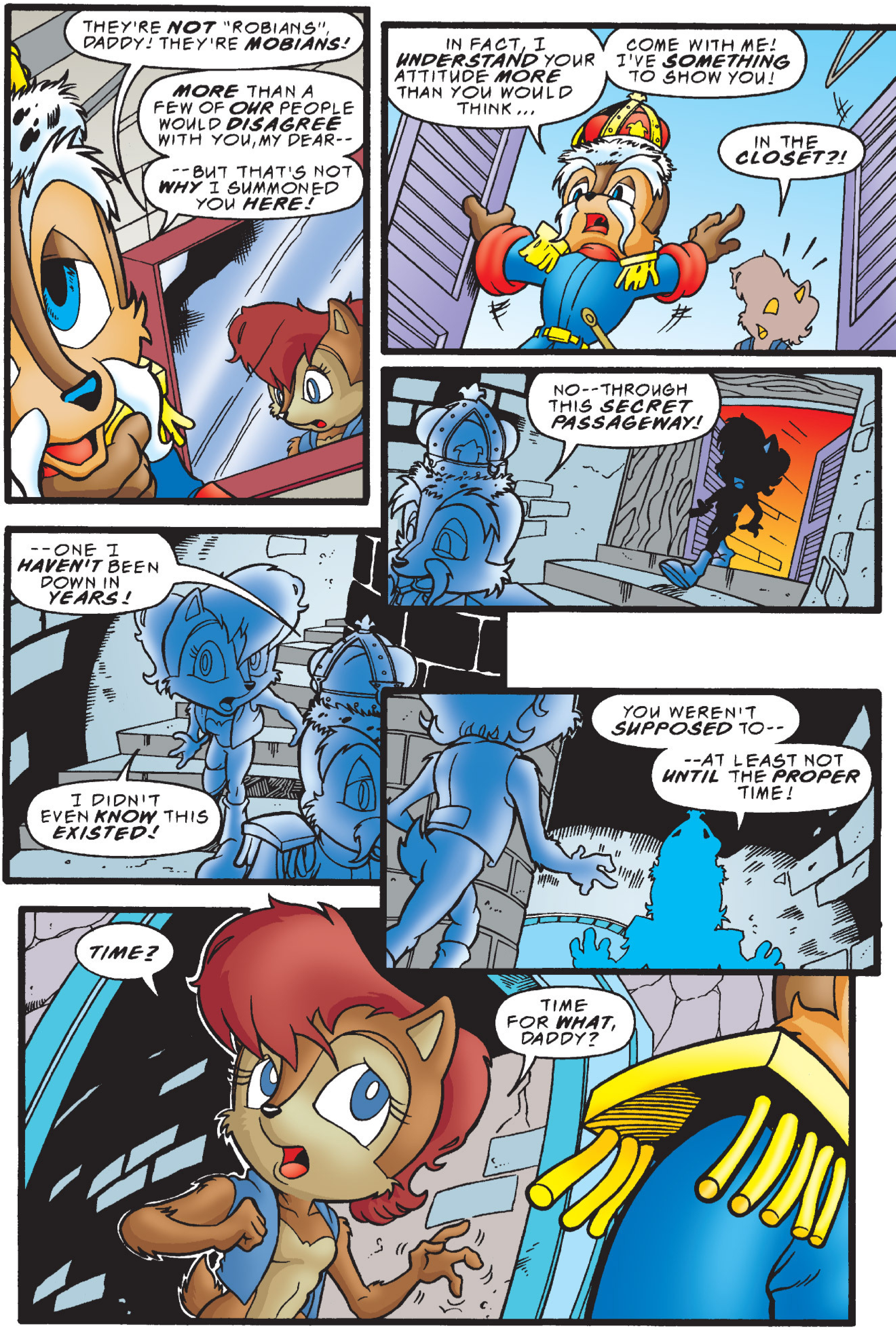
Eeeheeheehee! DON'T BE SO SURE, HEDGEHOG! OUR GAME ISN'T OVER YET!
LOOKOUT! THE IRON QUEEN'S BACK FOR A REMATCH!
JUST GET THE JOB DONE, AND LET ME DO THE DRIVING!
INSOLENT DOGS! HOW CAN YOU BE SO INCONSIDERATE?
I INVESTED A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND ENERGY INTO THAT MOUNTAIN-FIRE! WHY MUST YOU RUIN MY HANDIWORK?!?
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, QUEENIE-- I GOT THIS THING AGAINST POWER-CRAZED MEANIES MAKING OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES MISERABLE!
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'VE GOT A BIRTHDAY CAKE TO BLOW OUT!
WHOMP.. THERE IT IS! OUT LIKE THE MATCHLIGHT!
FLOOOOOSH!

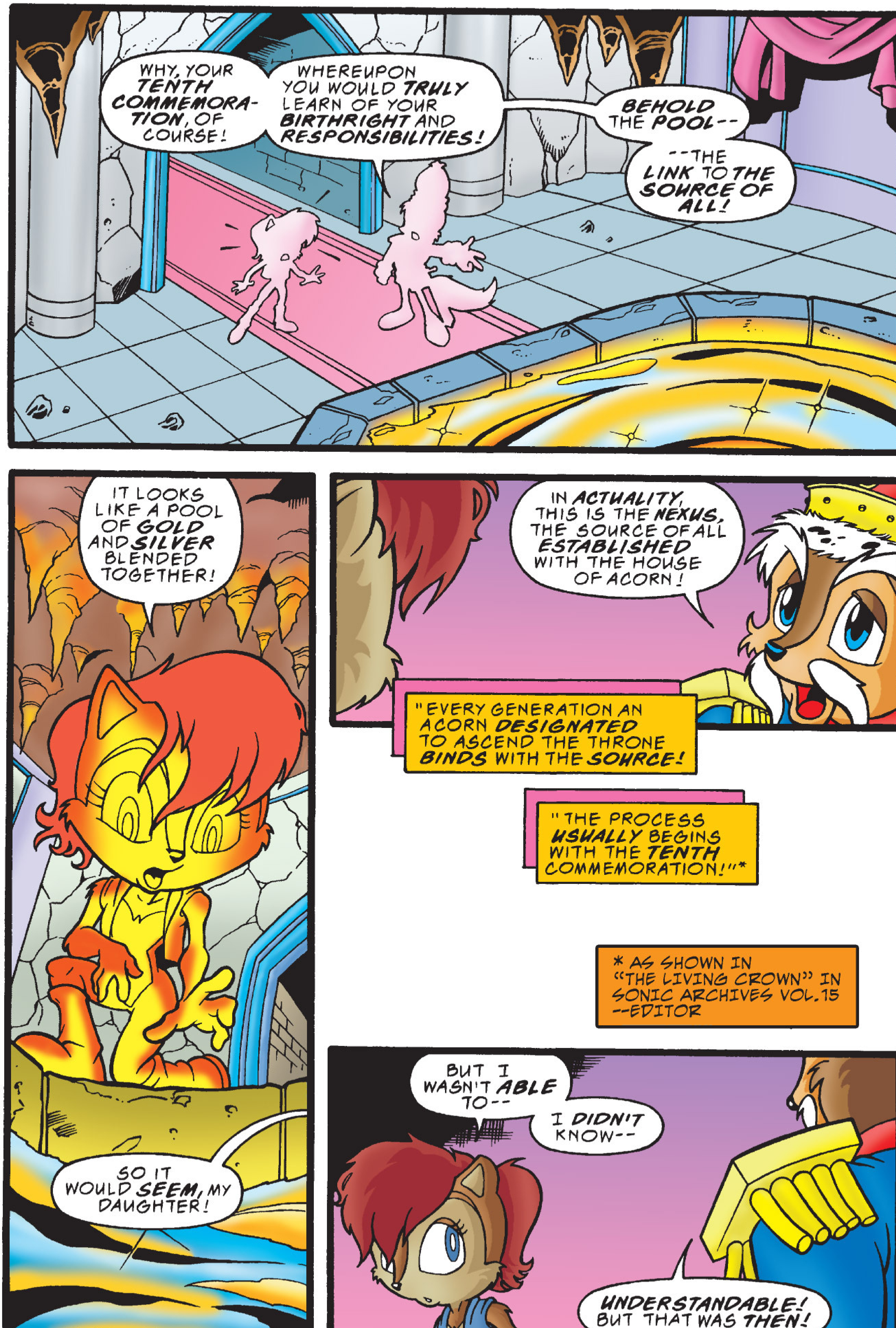

GAME, SET, AND MATCH, QUEENIE! ANOTHER SPECTACULAR VICTORY FOR THE GOOD GUYS! GOT ANY PARTING WORDS FOR THE HOME TEAM CROWD?
YES: "CURSES--FOILED AGAIN!" I WON'T REST UNTIL I HAVE MY REVENGE! UNTIL THEN, LOOK FOR ME IN YOUR NIGHTMARES!
HAHAHAHA! YOU DID IT, SONIC! THE CURSE HAS LIFTED AT LAST!
WELL SHUCKS, LI MOON! T'WEREN'T NOTHIN' ANY OTHER HERO WOULDN'T HAVE DONE!
HEY, DON'T FORGET--WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THE MONKEY KHAN'S HELP.
I'M NOT AT ALL SURPRISED. THE ANCIENT PROPHESIES FORETOLD THE ASCENSION OF A GREAT MONKEY KING!
MONKEY... KING?!?
PFFT! GO FIGURE! THE HEDGEHOG DOES ALL THE WORK, BUT THE MONKEY GETS HIS OWN PROPHESY!
MAN, I HAVE GOT TO GET A NEW PUBLICIST!
End

SUPER SONIC

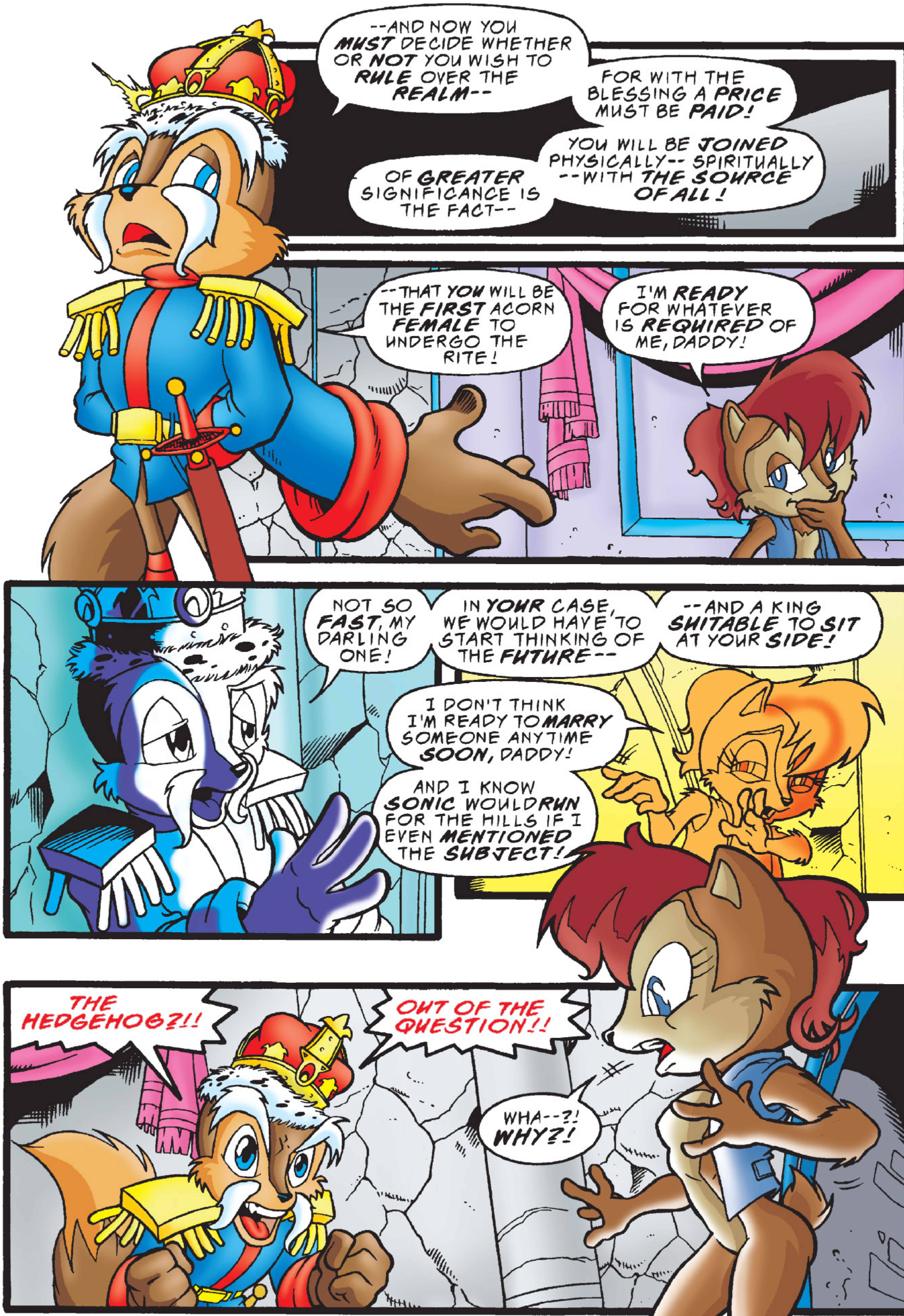

HEY KIDS! HERE'S A *BONUS PIN-UP* FOR YOU TO COLOR, PENCILLED BY THE ONE AND ONLY *JIM VALENTINO*, CREATOR OF *SHADOWHAWK* AND CO-FOUNDER OF *IMAGE COMICS!* ENJOY!
VALENTINO/PENDERS after Shuster

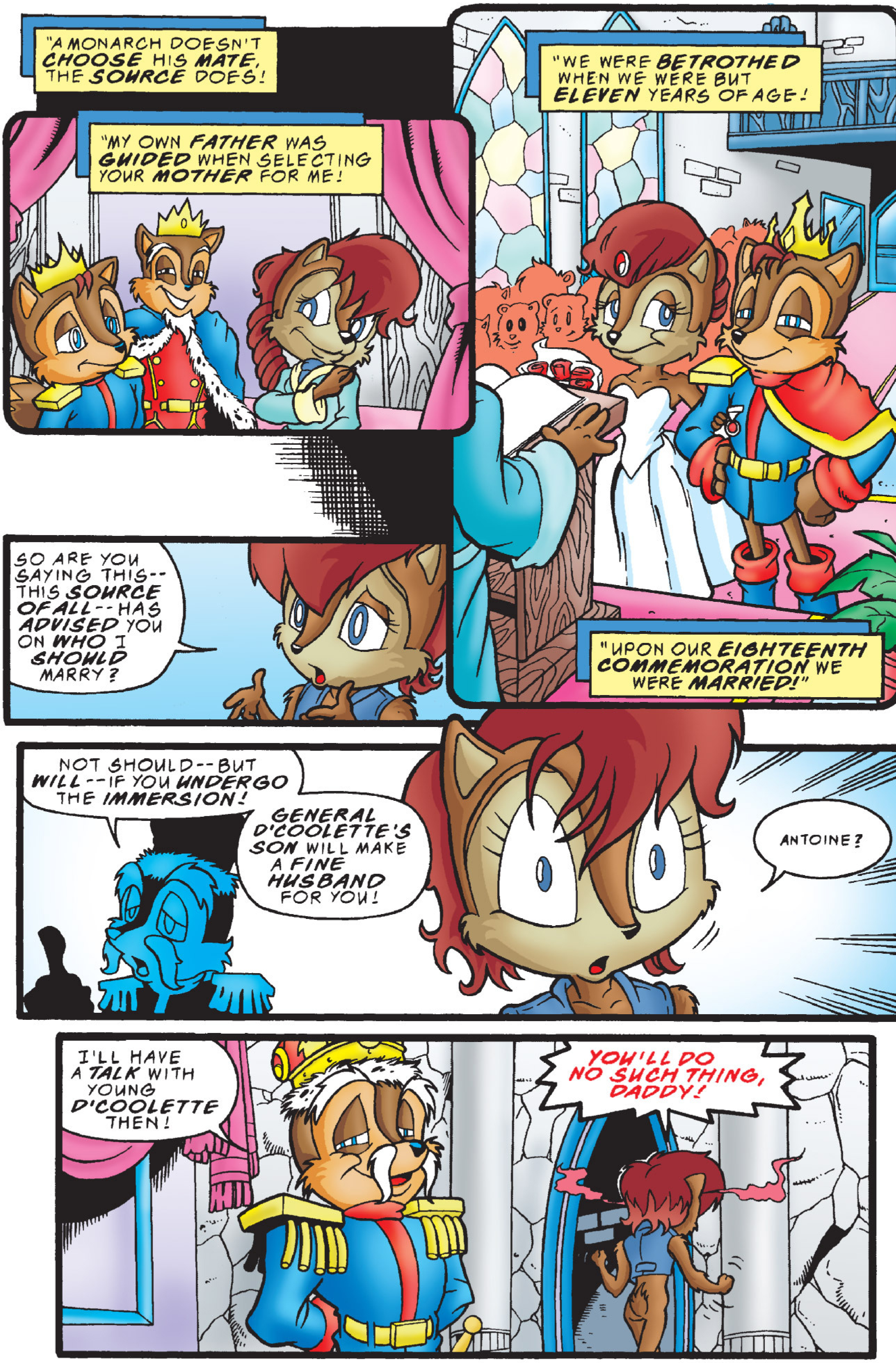

Tales of the Freedom Fighters
Presents:
PRINCESS Sally IN
THE ULTIMATUM
I WAS TOLD YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, DADDY!
YES! YES! COME IN, SALLY!
WE HAVEN'T REALLY SPOKEN MUCH LATELY--AND NOW THAT I'VE COLLECTED MY THOUGHTS--
WRITER/COLORIST: KEN PENDERS
PENCILS: MANNY GALAN
INKS: JIM AMASH
EDITOR: J. FREDDY GABRIE
I BELIEVE IT WELL PAST TIME WE DID!
I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY, DADDY!
I'VE ALWAYS DONE WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME TO DO, BUT IT'S JUST THAT--
--EVER SINCE I ORDERED THE DISMANTLING OF THE ROBIANS YOU'VE BEEN QUESTIONING MY JUDGEMENT!
NOW I ADMIT I WASN'T COMPLETELY "MYSELF" THEN AND HAVE SINCE ALLOWED THE ROBIANS THEIR OWN SPACE AT KNOTHOLE VILLAGE.

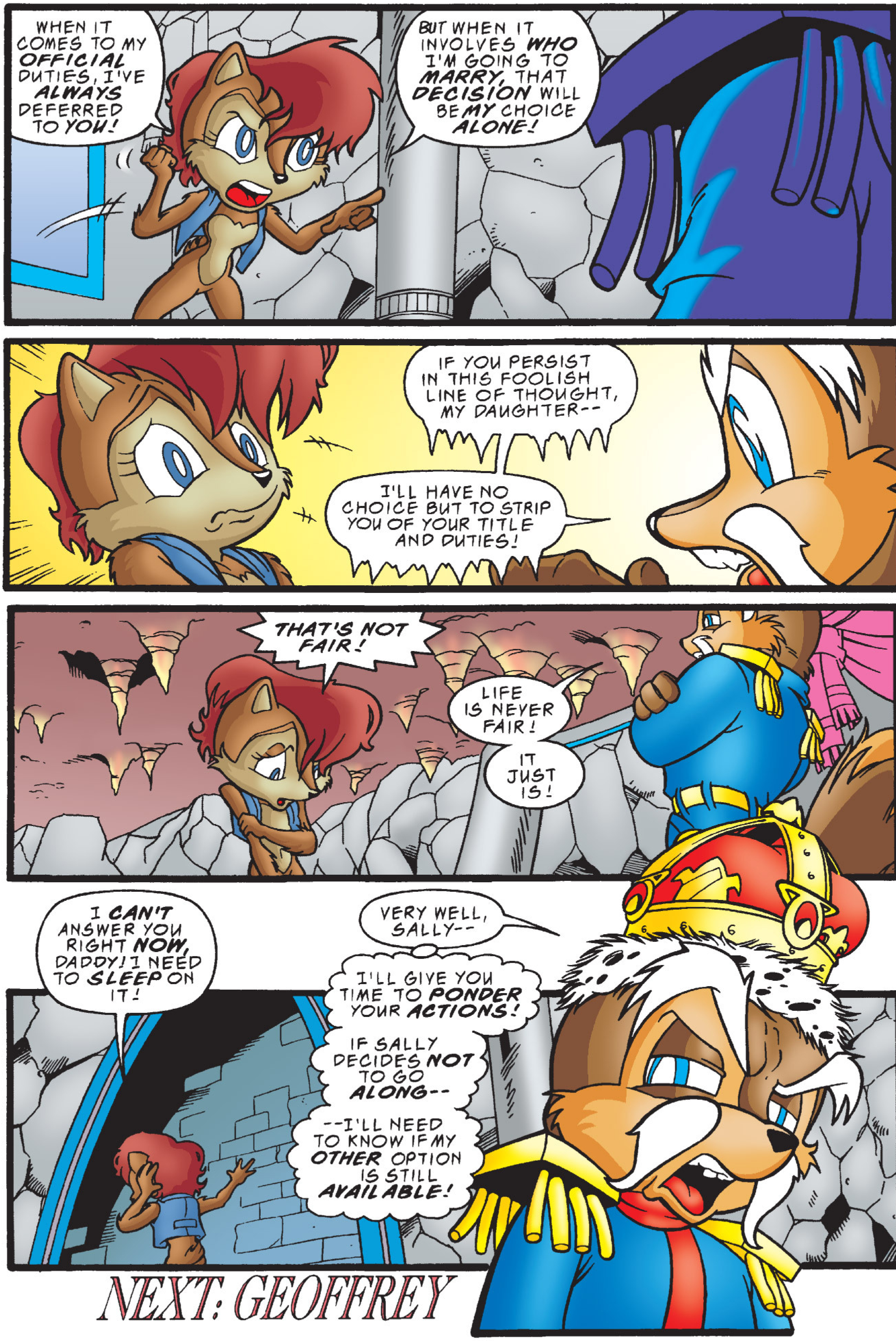

THEY'RE NOT "ROBIANS", DADDY! THEY'RE MOBIANS!
MORE THAN A FEW OF OUR PEOPLE WOULD DISAGREE WITH YOU, MY DEAR--
--BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I SUMMONED YOU HERE!
IN FACT, I UNDERSTAND YOUR ATTITUDE MORE THAN YOU WOULD THINK...
COME WITH ME! I'VE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU!
IN THE CLOSET?!
NO--THROUGH THIS SECRET PASSAGEWAY!
--ONE I HAVEN'T BEEN DOWN IN YEARS!
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THIS EXISTED!
YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO--
--AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE PROPER TIME!
TIME?
TIME FOR WHAT, DADDY?



WHY, YOUR **TENTH COMMEMORATION**, OF COURSE!
WHEREUPON YOU WOULD **TRULY** LEARN OF YOUR **BIRTHRIGHT** AND **RESPONSIBILITIES!**
BEHOLD THE **POOL**--
--THE **LINK** TO **THE SOURCE OF ALL!**
IT LOOKS LIKE A POOL OF **GOLD** AND **SILVER** BLENDED TOGETHER!
SO IT WOULD **SEEM,** MY DAUGHTER!
IN **ACTUALITY,** THIS IS THE **NEXUS,** THE SOURCE OF ALL **ESTABLISHED** WITH THE HOUSE OF ACORN!
"EVERY GENERATION AN ACORN **DESIGNATED** TO ASCEND THE THRONE **BINDS** WITH THE **SOURCE!**
"THE PROCESS **USUALLY** BEGINS WITH THE **TENTH** COMMEMORATION!"*
* AS SHOWN IN "THE LIVING CROWN" IN SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 15 --EDITOR
BUT I WASN'T **ABLE** TO--
I **DIDN'T** KNOW--
UNDERSTANDABLE! BUT THAT WAS **THEN!**


--AND NOW YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO RULE OVER THE REALM--
FOR WITH THE BLESSING A PRICE MUST BE PAID!
YOU WILL BE JOINED PHYSICALLY-- SPIRITUALLY --WITH THE SOURCE OF ALL!
OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE IS THE FACT--
--THAT YOU WILL BE THE FIRST ACORN FEMALE TO UNDERGO THE RITE!
I'M READY FOR WHATEVER IS REQUIRED OF ME, DADDY!
NOT SO FAST, MY DARLING ONE!
IN YOUR CASE, WE WOULD HAVE TO START THINKING OF THE FUTURE--
--AND A KING SUITABLE TO SIT AT YOUR SIDE!
I DON'T THINK I'M READY TO MARRY SOMEONE ANYTIME SOON, DADDY!
AND I KNOW SONIC WOULD RUN FOR THE HILLS IF I EVEN MENTIONED THE SUBJECT!
THE HEDGEHOG?!!
OUT OF THE QUESTION!!
WHA--?! WHY?!


"A MONARCH DOESN'T CHOOSE HIS MATE, THE SOURCE DOES!
"MY OWN FATHER WAS GUIDED WHEN SELECTING YOUR MOTHER FOR ME!
"WE WERE BETROTHED WHEN WE WERE BUT ELEVEN YEARS OF AGE!
"UPON OUR EIGHTEENTH COMMEMORATION WE WERE MARRIED!"
SO ARE YOU SAYING THIS-- THIS SOURCE OF ALL--HAS ADVISED YOU ON WHO I SHOULD MARRY?
NOT SHOULD--BUT WILL--IF YOU UNDERGO THE IMMERSION!
GENERAL D'COOLETTE'S SON WILL MAKE A FINE HUSBAND FOR YOU!
ANTOINE?
I'LL HAVE A TALK WITH YOUNG D'COOLETTE THEN!
YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, DADDY!


WHEN IT COMES TO MY OFFICIAL DUTIES, I'VE ALWAYS DEFERRED TO YOU!
BUT WHEN IT INVOLVES WHO I'M GOING TO MARRY, THAT DECISION WILL BE MY CHOICE ALONE!
IF YOU PERSIST IN THIS FOOLISH LINE OF THOUGHT, MY DAUGHTER--
I'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STRIP YOU OF YOUR TITLE AND DUTIES!
THAT'S NOT FAIR!
LIFE IS NEVER FAIR!
IT JUST IS!
I CAN'T ANSWER YOU RIGHT NOW, DADDY! I NEED TO SLEEP ON IT!
VERY WELL, SALLY--
I'LL GIVE YOU TIME TO PONDER YOUR ACTIONS!
IF SALLY DECIDES NOT TO GO ALONG--
--I'LL NEED TO KNOW IF MY OTHER OPTION IS STILL AVAILABLE!
NEXT: GEOFFREY